

Essay on The Best Time of The Year in My Country

Around May, the stalls begin to appear along the main roads. Slowly the appearance of stalls spread to smaller roads and finally we get an explosion of stalls everywhere.

What do these stalls sell, why the sudden increase in number?

Ah, it is fruit season again in my country and it is the best time of the year for me and, I am sure, for many other people as well.

The flowers on the durian and rambutan trees in January have now turned to sweet fruits. Everywhere durians by the lorry-loads are carted from the orchards to the vendors.

Along the roadsides in towns and cities can be seen people haggling and bargaining with the vendors about the price of the durians. This beloved fruit the durian is the main point of interest for many Malaysian at this time of the year. Most of us love durian. The smell and taste are things that we can get nowhere else in the world, One either loves or hates the durian. There is no such thing as a lukewarm attitude towards it. Some of us love it to the point of obsession while some cannot stand the sight, or rather, the smell of it. I know of foreigners who describe eating the durian as similar to eating strawberry ice-cream in a public toilet! What an unfair criticism it is. Given time I am sure these foreigners will learn to love the durian as fervently as the locals.

This time of the year witnesses the annual emergence of durian experts. They claim to be able to judge the quality of the fruit inside by looking at, smelling or shaking the fruit. While most of this so-called expert are actually frauds, some are genuine. The

genuine ones are usually old men who have dealt with durian for umpteen years. All they have to do is to take a whiff of the tip of durian to be able to predict accurately what sort of a condition the inside is. They have my utmost admiration.

So we go about the annual task of opening the spiny fruit and putting the golden contents into our month. What a glorious time it is. However, we have to be careful not to be gluttonous. Otherwise, we will end up in the clinic to atone for our sins. Experienced durian-lovers like me do not exceed our limits. We know when to stop.

Besides the ubiquitous durians are also a large assortment of other fruits. We have rambutans, mangosteens, langsats, rambais and of course perennial fruits like guavas and mangoes. So when we tire of durians we can switch to the others. However, they pale in comparison with the durian. Granted these other fruits have their own unique taste and smell, they are invariably not that sense-jolting as the durian. The durian remains the “king” of fruits.

All good things, however, must come to an end. So it is with the fruit season. Gradually the stalls are abandoned and the prices of the fruits increase as the number of fruits on sale dwindles. Finally, the fruit season comes to an end. No more do we see people haggling and stuffing their mouths by the roadside. No more do we get pricked by the durian’s spines. The stalls are empty except for some that sell the perennial fruits, petals, and other miscellaneous things. The next mini-season comes in December, but it is a minor affair compared to the grand one that we have when May comes around once again and the stalls are filled to the brim with fruits. Then the best time of the year comes once again to our beloved country.